

A Road Less Traveled

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Category: Halo, Mass Effect

Genre: Sci-Fi

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2014-02-05 06:32:32

Updated: 2014-02-10 19:21:19

Packaged: 2016-04-27 03:46:41

Rating: T

Chapters: 2

Words: 3,389

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Mistakes are a universal constant, they are made constantly by every race that has ever been known. But mistakes made by a single Batarian ship and the Turians in pursuit of it, will have far more reaching consequences than most. Halo/Mass Effect Crossover, AU

1. Prologue: Interrogation

****I rewrote it again. I'm terrible and I know it, but I'm not sorry that I changed it, I really felt like the previous iteration had terrible pacing, and character interaction.****

****Anyway, the story and the events described in the previous 'timeline' are altered a bit to avoid inconsistencies that previous reviewers have pointed out, (Seriously I can't thank you guys enough for the input), I don't have a timeline here because I felt that it would be cooler and more challenging to reveal more of this stuff through dialogue than a straight up Codex entry.****

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><p>Chapter 1: Interrogation and Discovery

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><p>Unknown Location, Unknown Date

The human had awoke in a small room, shackled and sitting on a cold metal chair. The entire room was covered in a smooth, dull, and silvery alloy, and nearly imperceptible hum emanated from the floor, leading him to believe he was on a ship of some sort.

Before he could try to understand his situation any further the lone entrance to the fully metal room opened and a tall bipedal creature stepped through. Covered in an odd metallic carapace, the being was over six feet tall and sported the eyes of a predatory bird. The

being turned to his companions and uttered something in its foreign language through the large mandibles and sharp teeth that it possessed.

The beings appearance forced the human to regain his memories of what had transpired to lead to his imprisonment here. He remembered everything, the orbital bombardment, the invasion, and his capture. He was immediately filled with a sense of dread, he didn't know anything about these aliens, but at least one thing was for certain, if they kept prisoners they could at least be reasoned with.

The alien took a seat across from him, a metal table separating them. The alien's cold eyes bored into his, but he refused to show weakness and stared back just as powerfully.

Suddenly a flash of orange light emanated from the alien's arm, some form of holographic projection floated above it and followed his arm movements. The being tapped the projection with its talons at a few different points and started to speak.

"Can you understand me?" It spoke, its accent affecting English speech with a flanging effect.

Surprised inwardly that the being could speak fluent English, the human showed no signs outwardly and continued to stare into the being's eyes without emotion or a response. It was evident enough that the holographic projection was some sort of translation device.

"I don't have time for games human. I know you are able to speak, so don't toy with me." The alien's voice was filled with slight annoyance at the human's actions.

"Very well." The human spoke aloud, his deep voice filling the room, "What do you want?"

The alien seemed to smirk at the human's question as if it was a joke, "I want information, a person of your position should know what an interrogation room looks like."

"You might as well kill me already then, because I won't give away the UNSC's secrets to some alien scum like yourself." he replied with a look of disgust on his face.

The alien chuckled slightly before continuing, "I doubt a primitive species like yourself will be able to keep secrets from the Hierarchy." He spoke with a slight aura of superiority, "It is best for you and your people if you cooperate with me."

The human once again refused to answer, preferring to give out a small huff at the alien's threat before leaning back in the chair.

The alien's annoyed expression returned but he made no comment on the human's action, "What is the designation of your military forces?" he asked.

The human spoke in a reluctant tone, "The United Nations Space Command, or UNSC for short." The insignificant data still made him feel dirty for revealing it.

The being nodded with the ghost of a smirk on its face, "What branch of this service do you belong to?"

"The Marines"

"What is this world's name?"

He paused slightly before answering again "Shanxi."

The alien nodded in recognition, "This planet is too underdeveloped to be your homeworld. Where is your home system?"

The human took on a defiant stance once again, "You can ask all you want but I'm not going to divulge secrets that will harm the UNSC."

The alien tilted its head only slightly, "Honorable, but futile. Despite your convictions we will find out, whether you cooperate or not."

"Who the hell do you people think you are anyway? Do you think you can just invade any planet you want to?" The human growled, agitated by the alien's superiority complex.

The alien looked slightly surprised before it hid its emotions once more, "I am Lieutenant Vyrher, my species is Turian, and the Turian Hierarchy is more than capable of putting down a primitive species that has yet to even begin using Mass Effect technology." Vyrher spoke with great conviction, "I would not test us."

The human's face distorted into a scowl, "We've dealt with aliens like you before, Turian. I have no doubts that history will repeat itself here."

"This is not your first contact?" The Turian's expression turned back to one of interest and curiosity.

"The Rachni put up a hell of a better fight than you did when they invaded, and we kicked their bug asses back to whatever hellhole they came from back in 2514." The human spoke, not noticing the shocked expression on the Turians face, "You obviously don't know who you're playing with xeno, because I wouldn't test _us_."

The scraping of metal on metal filled the room as the Turian stood up suddenly, only now did the human notice his counterpart's odd actions. The Turian was about to reach the door before the human spoke again, "What the hell has gotten into you?"

Vyrher turned around slowly and his eyes darted down the human's blue uniform to the name imprinted there, "General Williams, if you're telling me the truth, then this conversation has just gone far higher than my pay grade."

With that said the door slid open revealing only the two guards from earlier, Vyrher stepped through and cast one last glance at the prisoner's confused face before the door slid back and cut off his line of sight.

A million thoughts flew through the Turian's mind after his

conversation with the human, but one was at the top of his priorities. He had to tell the Admiral of this development, and fast.

2. Chapter 1: Discovery

****Second chapter of the rewrite, hope I've improved a bit upon the predecessor's failings ****

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><p>Chapter 1: Discovery

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><p>Dunalt System, February 3rd, 2525

****12:45****

The thick tarnished hull of the aging dreadnought trembled slightly from a heavy impact upon its kinetic shields, illuminating the vessel in a faded blue light for a split second before its exterior darkened once more.

The scene around the ship was that of organized chaos, small kinetic rounds were accelerated to incredible speeds between two fleets. The slugs vaporizing themselves on contact with a ship's barriers, or occasionally punching a large hole in a vessel unfortunate enough to have lost its shields, scattering shrapnel throughout the hull.

The battle layout clearly favored one side, their ships numerically outnumbering their foes considerably as well as having far superior positioning, encircling and tearing apart the aged enemy vessels like fish in a barrel. Their distinctive sleek but angled designs, combined with the abundance of large aft wings identified them as forces of the Turian Hierarchy.

At the center of the battle held the Batarian pirate forces, their blockier and much less aesthetically pleasing vessels were surrounded from all angles. Mostly used to either fight civilian ships or to hold slaves, the Batarian's shielding and armor were barely comparable to the Turian's. Their defensive formation had turned into a debris field as the husks of destroyed ships scattered pieces of metal throughout the space near them, often hitting their brethren.

Equally chaotic as the scene outside the ship, was the bridge of the Batarian dreadnought, whose crew was desperately attempting to keep the vessel together. Shouts rang out from various crew members all around the bridge of the vessel as they hurried about their duties, "Shields at 30%, another hit like that and they're gone, we can't take this for much longer!"

On the screen of a tactical officer, one of the few frigates left maneuvered to take aim at an enemy corvette before it was suddenly sheared in half by a large mass accelerator round, penetrating the weakened shield and spewing shrapnel throughout the center of the vessel, cutting it to ribbons. The two halves being propelled in different directions by the kinetic force.

"We've lost another frigate, we don't have many left!" He shouted into the air, furiously attempting to maneuver the dreadnought away from half of the wreck which aimlessly floated on a collision course towards the still functioning dreadnought.

The spinally mounted Mass Accelerator caused the dreadnought to tremble as it let loose a forty kilogram slug straight at the Turian cruiser it had focused its attention on. The cruiser attempted to turn out of the way but the accelerated slug tore through the side of the vessel, slicing through the moderately thick armor like butter as it nearly cleaved the ship in half. The aft wing ripped off of it in the process and was sent hurtling towards a Turian frigate, whose superior maneuverability allowed it to barely avoided its ally's severed limb.

A much more authoritative voice rose above the rest on the bridge, originating from the command station situated at the center of the room, "Where the hell is my FTL drive?" The commander of the ship Rhattan Kel'shak's four eyes bored into the skull of one of the navigational crewmen.

"Thirty seconds sir! But the rest of the fleet-" The officer started, before his report was cut off by the commander's own loud response.

"The rest of the fleet can go fuck themselves." His stressed and angered voice ripped through the bridge, "Unless you want to join them in a mass grave, get us _**god damn moving!**_"

He received acknowledgement in the form of heavy acceleration, the 850 meter vessel rumbled as its entire body was stressed upon by the new forces created by the dreadnought's large engines. It flew through the numerous Batarian wrecks that littered their escape path, warped, red-hot metal passed through the kinetic barriers with impunity, but merely bounced off the thick armor that covered the vessel.

The terminals which hosted communications suddenly lit up with the angry yells from the various Batarian frigates they were attempting to leave for dead. These vessels were composed of pirates, not soldiers and they counted their lives more important than their lead ship's escape.

However, when the Batarian frigates attempted to follow suit, they either were continued to be bombarded by the Turian patrol's relentless assault, or were torn to shreds by the randomly strewn wrecks which tore holes through their much thinner armor, causing rapid decompression and ripping the unlucky crews into the vacuum of space.

The now solitary dreadnought maneuvered skillfully through the lifeless graveyard of ships, unable to avoid most wreckage but minimizing the damage to its hull. The ship finally reached the edge and was inadvertently blocked by the still intact, but crippled body of a Batarian frigate, the dreadnought's body rumbled once more as the main gun tore through the frigate's midsection, nearly vaporizing the entire ship and sending the remainder of its corpse flying.

The Dreadnought tore through the space the small pirate frigate had

once occupied, bursting through one last wall of debris and entering the empty space between the two fleets as smaller mass accelerator slugs from Turian frigates peppered the now heavily diminished kinetic barriers. Now the only remaining target, the entire patrol fleet oriented themselves towards the accelerating vessel and opened fire with renewed vigor.

"Five seconds until FTL jump!" The navigational officer shouted into the now incredibly tense atmosphere of the warship's bridge.

"Four!" Dozens of slugs accelerated to a fraction of the speed of light flew through the vacuum that separated them from the last Batarian ship.

"Three!" The crew held their collective breath as the ship rumbled under the stress of acceleration.

"Two!" The smaller rounds impacted the Batarian dreadnought, finally breaking through the shields and hitting the rear section of armor, the kinetic energy transferred mitigated by the ship's own incredible velocity.

"One!" The last heavy slugs neared the ship, reaching towards the now heavily damaged section of aft armor.

"Zero!" Finally, a mass effect field enveloped the vessel, altering its mass and pushing the vessel past the speed of light. The field bent the light which entered it into a magnificent spectrum of colors, almost as if they were in a rainbow after a storm. The damaged ship now speeding away from the ravaged graveyard of its kin.

* * *

><p>Admiral Tyras Sirrinus watched the screen in front of him curiously as the final Batarian ship jumped to FTL speeds, blue-shifting and disappearing into the distance, only just escaping the barrage of rounds that had followed after it. The battle had been short, and for his side, relatively bloodless, the Turians only losing a single cruiser, and an assortment of frigates and smaller vessels.<p>

The voice of his tactical officer next to him drew his attention away from the screen, "The last slaver ship has jumped away sir, all other Batarian vessels are destroyed or otherwise crippled."

Letting out a sigh, the leader of the Turian patrol fleet turned and walked to the communications terminal of the bridge, "Well that complicates things, we can't let an entire dreadnought escape."

Looking down towards one of the communications officers he continued, "Contact the Salarian's STG vessel, hopefully they have some good news for us." The Lieutenant tapped a few keys on his terminal before looking up and nodding silently to the Admiral.

"Commander Viralli, I expect you know what this is about?" Tyras straightened himself and spoke confidently into the open space of the bridge.

"Yes, Batarian vessel has escaped, a great deal of luck seems to have played a hand in that, but it is of little consequence." The Salarian agent spoke quickly over the intercom of the Turian bridge, "The tracking device was planted without any problems, the quantum entanglement device is sending us its location as we speak."

Tyras grinned slightly as the Salarians confirmed what he had hoped, "I hope you'll be sharing that information with us?" he spoke in a joking yet expectant tone.

A short silence followed before the Salarian Commander curtly responded, "Of course Admiral, the data will be sent over at once. Commander Viralli out."

The connection terminated as the communications officer confirmed the transfer of the Batarian's coordinates, "We have their FTL vector sir, shall I disseminate it to the rest of the fleet?"

The Captain gave his lieutenant a small nod of affirmation, "Yes, order the fleets into formation in preparation to pursue. We aren't letting those Batarian rats get away." he replied with a smirk.

In unison the crew responded with, "Yes sir!", before the viewscreen showed the massive Patrol Fleet maneuvering into position. The 2nd Patrol Fleet was a massive force that guarded the border of Citadel Space and the Attican Traverse, equipped with three dreadnoughts, ten cruisers, and twenty-four frigates. The mere thought of the Turian 2nd Patrol Fleet made any criminal who operated in the Attican Traverse sweat with nervousness.

Under the Council's orders, Tyras with the help of a STG vessel, had exclusively hunted the Batarian slavers that had started to infest the border. Rhattal Kar'shak was the last major Batarian leader that operated in this region, and for this reason the destruction of him and his old Batarian dreadnought was tantamount to the final end to slavery on the Citadel's expansive frontier.

The bustle of the bridge in preparation for FTL brought Tyras from his thoughts, the ships in formation initiated acceleration. The much more advanced Turian inertial dampeners, allowed the vessels to seamlessly transfer to FTL, the normal low hum of the ships engines being the only disturbance as they accelerated out of the system towards their quarry.

* * *

><p>Unknown Location, February 3rd,
2525

15:32

"Power in the FTL drive is starting to fail!" A shout rang out on the bridge as the mass effect field surrounding the ship failed, the dreadnoughts already damaged hull's groaning was a very real warning as to the condition of the ship as the vessel decelerated quickly.

The serene colors of FTL travel were consumed by the dark void of normal space as the dreadnought arrived in an uncharted location inside the Attican Traverse, loose plating from the battle was

unceremoniously ripped from the hull as the dreadnought violently came to a halt.

The Batarian Commander Rhattal quickly recomposed himself and yelled out, "What the _hell_ happened, why did we stop?" as the rest of the crew slowly readjusted to the change in G forces.

"Power stopped flowing to the drive core for enough time to shut down our mass effect field, the damage we took to the back of the ship in our escape probably had something to do with it." A lone navigational crewman spoke after recovering.

Rhattal growled in frustration at his predicament, thinking that they needed to get as far away as possible to lessen the chances of the patrol finding them again. "Damn it, do we at least know where we are?"

"Uncharted space within the Attican Traverse, I don't-" The officer was interrupted by another crewmember, "Sir, our sensors are back online, they just picked up what looks like an inactive Mass Relay right next to us."

Outside the damaged ship, the gigantic alien transportation device loomed over the Batarian vessel, nearly invisible to the naked eye due to the lack of light sources, but the scanners that the ship was equipped with picked the structure out easily, despite its inactive state.

The surprise on Kel'shak's face was evident, thinking to himself, "_A Mass Relay this far out? There isn't another system around for lightyears!"_

However, Kel'shak's previous worries still held priority over him before he delved deeper into the mystery sitting in front of his ship, "Never mind that, can you activate it?"

"W-what sir?" The crewman stuttered in shock, "That's incredibly dangerous! We don't even know where it could lead!"

The Batarian Commander fixed his pointed gaze on the officer, "And I want to be sure that we won't die at the hands of the Turian military. We activate the Relay, stay on the other side of it until the danger they pose passes, and come out once their patrols have given up."

The officer didn't immediately look convinced, but as soon as Rhattal started to move towards him while reaching for his pistol, he quickly tapped a few commands into his terminal, "Its going to take a while sir, I can't just activate a new Relay with a push of a button."

Rhattal merely responded with a short huff as he returned to the center of the bridge, the Relay overlooking his comparatively insignificant vessel ominously. Rhattal sensed an immense feeling of foreboding rising inside him before he focused on something else, dismissing the feeling as a side effect from the quick exit from FTL.

After all, while the Turians could be searching for him they couldn't possibly know his exact location. They had plenty of time to escape,

and the Mass Relay would only assure their safe evasion of the military's wrath.

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><p>AN: Thanks for reading! I'll try to have the next chapter up pretty soon but until then I'd really like some feedback on if you thought it was an improvement or not.**

End
file.